

A SIMPLE REALITY CHECK

Do I want *Vaikuṅṭha* or *Vṛndāvana*?

Once upon a time there was a very simple lady who really wanted to live with Kṛṣṇa. It's not that she clearly understood or knew anything of Him. It's just that she found most people and things in this world far from perfect and had fixed her mind on the idea that Kṛṣṇa and His world are most perfect. And so she wanted to live with Him.

Whenever her young son would lie to her or come home from school late and covered in mud or steal ten rupees to buy his favorite sweet she would scold him severely. And her self-righteous tirade would always conclude with the words, "Nothing in this world is perfect. And you, my dear son, are far from perfect. My Kṛṣṇa is most perfect. He's the most perfect son. Why can't you be like him?"

Her husband was a simple soul who quite often made mistakes or forgot to bring home the long list of things she'd demand him to collect from the market. This greatly irritated her and she'd quite often burst into tears. She was a pious and chaste wife and so she'd never yell at her husband. But her mind would so often scream, "I can tolerate that you're not as beautiful nor strong as my Kṛṣṇa. But why can't you remember to do the simple things I ask of you. Why are you always making mistakes? My Kṛṣṇa NEVER makes mistakes. Nothing in this place is perfect, but Kṛṣṇa's world is absolutely perfect. I don't belong here; I want to go there."

Although her preoccupation with Kṛṣṇa and His world was uninformed, when she died she did go to the world of Kṛṣṇa. She was charmed by the exquisite beauty of *Vṛndāvana* and its residents. But she soon became aware that things weren't perfect in *Vṛndāvana* either. Kṛṣṇa would quite often come home dirty and He seemed preoccupied with stealing from the neighbors' houses. If people scolded Him, He would often retaliate by urinating on their floor or harassing their young children. He also wasn't proper in His dealings with the young girls in the village. This was well known, but the circumstance was never challenged, nor rectified.

Days passed and the lady became more and more disturbed. Mother *Rohiṇī* noticed this and asked her, "My dear, why are you so upset? What is troubling your mind? Please tell me and I'll try to make you happy." Encouraged by these words the lady blurted out, "Nothing in this place is perfect! Kṛṣṇa's always doing nonsense and is never corrected. My God is perfect; He's not like this Kṛṣṇa. I don't want to live here. I want to live in a perfect place with perfect people." Merciful *Rohiṇī* replied, "Oh, this is quite a serious dilemma you are facing. Let me speak to my son. Perhaps we can help solve your problem. Give me two hours and then we'll meet again."

The lady was calmed, and charmed by Rohiṇī's sweet voice and words and patiently awaited her return. Within two hours Rohiṇī did return and she was accompanied by her son Balarāma. "My dear lady", she said, "I have discussed your unhappiness with my son and we think we have a very good solution for you. It seems Vṛndāvana is not your home. We both feel you'd be a lot happier in Vaikuṅṭha. Everyone and everything is so perfect there. My son will take you there if you are happy with this decision."

"Yes, yes" replied the lady, "This sounds wonderful! Thank you so much for your kindness. I'd be very grateful if your son could take me there." As soon as the lady uttered these words Balarāma smiled and she found herself mystically transported to another world. It was a very beautiful world where everyone and everything was perfect. She felt very much at home and very, very happy.

Comment:

Is my desired goal Goloka Vṛndāvana or Vaikuṅṭha? Do my personal dealings, sense of discrimination and value structure match my cherished goal? Hmm! Perhaps I need to make time to think about this more carefully. Maybe there are some adjustments I need to make to my mood and mindset.